The COMMONWEAL

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FROM AN unimpeachable source, the daily papers inform us that even if the French National Assembly does not accept the recommendations of the London conference on western Germany, "the United States and Britain are determined to push the formation of some sort of German state"—being agreed that the Germans in *their* two zones at all events must be given "some sort of political responsibility." Since the German people was not born to this latter, nor have achieved it, it must be thrust upon them, willy-nilly. The Minister-Presidents of the three zones intend to accept the responsibility of forming a federated government in the West, but are very unhappy about the internationalization of the Ruhr; most German officials are said to be in favor of the idea of a Western Government, though many do not care for the name, as being too provocative to the USSR. The date chosen for the beginning of the new state is June 15th, when the German leaders will call a constituent Assembly to write a constitution. The procedure is almost identical with the French actions in North Africa, and, more specifically, in Algeria in 1946, as a result of pressure brought by the Arabs during the war to obtain greater representation.

In Western Germany there will be little outward change after June 15th: the occupation troops are not to be withdrawn, only now the occupying authorities will recommend German participation. "Voting on the International Authority is, however, so arranged that the United States and Great Britain, by voting solidly, can always have a majority over France and the Benelux countries . . ." even if Germany itself votes with them. O wisest love! that so well guards its head. The combined zone and the French zone are already members of the organization for European Co-operation: that was agreed upon last April 16th. And the internationalization of the Ruhr, guaranteed by article 11, section B, of the communiqué establishing the new State, was recommended in Vienna by the World Socialist Conference the very day it was ordained in Washington—a very rough broomstick of a beggar's ride. The three most immediate snags the new state has to contend with are the possibility of a French refusal to ratify (it is even suggested the French Government may resign in the face of public pressure on this issue) and Russian hostility to Western Germany, which has declared the creation of the Western German State to be "a final step in the dismemberment of Germany." And, finally, the fact that Barkis is none too willing. Western Germany will contain three-fourths of the German people, and will have a population as great as that of the United Kingdom. To underwrite an experiment involving fifty million people is no small undertaking, and it makes the third of Western Germany's disabilities loom quite large: this lack of patriotic enthusiasm of its citizens for their new country may prove a disconvenience. Is it possible to compel guests to the agape of the democratic victors? Or will the master of the house (in this case in the plural) be obliged, as on the original occasion, to cast out the ill-clad guest? One of the saddest things about the situation in Germany is the utter hopelessness of all who have been deeply into the situation: the better informed, the most truly concerned the speaker, the more despondent. And yet, life has a habit of persisting, and it is no doubt within the realms of possibility that the new State, inauspiciously born on the anniversary of Waterloo, will rather favor the patron of June 15th, Saint Vitus.

200,000 *and All Mankind*

IT HAS been quite a long time since the war came to an end; the DPs have been sitting about in their camps for quite a long time. It is true that the years that have passed since the end

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of the war are very few years compared to the number of years which have passed since man was what is called prehistoric; they are very few years, compared to the number of years which mankind may have before it while awaiting the end of the world; but these years, for the DPs, have been months, days, minutes, seconds; and each fragmentation of time—which is unmeasurable—has assumed immense proportions and the time has passed very slowly or, rather, it has seemed not to have passed by at all, but to have become an eternal present.

The DPs have wanted to live again, and that means to live as other people live. And they have been kept waiting for a long time. Because they cannot live as others live until they can go to some country where they can work—above all where they can forget that they are DPs, and where everybody else will forget that they are DPs. That has been what they have wanted—for a very long time.

The fulfilment of their desire is one of the things the war was supposed to have achieved. All through the war we wept over them, pitying them in the concentration camps where they were held by the evil enemy. After the war was over they stayed in their camps, held there by the noble nations which had fought to free them—which had indeed freed them from forced labor and the threat of the gas chambers, but still held them in a sort of protective custody as if it were unsafe to allow them to go forth and meet the dangers and the rewards of freedom.

The DPs waited in their camps developing their peculiar sense of endlessly wasted time. Outside the camps, in the free and victorious nations, the conscience of peoples and governments were troubled about the DPs but, for them, time was kindly, soothing the consciences, erasing the memory of injustice, bringing new things to look at, new atom bombs, new problems, more timely problems—and so the DPs stayed where they were.

Palestine finally demonstrated in a practical manner the inconveniences resulting from the DP situation, for if the DPs had been given freedom —a freedom implemented by permission to emigrate in search of work and new homes—Zionism would not now be the annoyance it is to the governments. It is partially due to that annoyance that the Senate, pressed by its own urgencies—that is to say, by the closeness of its adjournment date—sat up late one night last week and passed a Bill to permit 200,000 DPs to enter this country between June of this year and June of 1950.

If the Senate had done no more than pass a Bill admitting one DP to come here so that we could see him, that would be good news. In that sense there is no denying that the present Senate Bill is good news. But in a broader sense the news unhappily is not so good. For the admission of these 200,000 DPs is hedged in with restrictions, ingeniously arranged to make it uncertain as to who can come and who cannot. The DPs will have once more to stand in line and when finally they reach the desk where the American puts the visa on the piece of paper, some of them will get the visa and some will not. For the Senate Bill is narrowly selective: it does not say we will take 200,000; it says we do not want to take anyone, we have never wanted to take anyone, but there seems no way of saying exactly that, and so we will take a certain kind of DP, farmers, but not intellectuals, as few Jews as possible, as few political people as possible, just nice farmers —half of them must be farmers—and we will make these people stand in line, or parade them on platforms so that we can judge their points, as once we did in the slave markets, and then we will let the safe ones in. And now we have done what we had to do and never talk to us about DPs again.

We shall have to talk about DPs again. But not always by that name. We shall have to talk about the right of men anywhere in the world to move freely anywhere in the world. We shall have to talk about the Italians, for instance, who are not DPs but who must be allowed to emigrate because there is not enough land in Italy for all Italians to live by. We shall have to talk about this freedom of movement until it is secured for all men everywhere. Because until then, there is no justice and there can be no peace.

Wages, Profits, and Depression

THE MAY issues of *Labor's Monthly Survey* of the AFL and the *Economic Outlook* of the CIO, which have just been distributed, both stress the same viewpoint about a crucial economic problem. President William Green of the AFL writes: "Increasing production per worker, rising wages and declining prices created the American standard of living. We need to get back to this pattern of progress. . . . Two things are essential: (1) A steady advance in production per worker, not by speed-up, but by improved techniques and teamwork between management and unions. (2) Sharing with workers the increased income achieved by this teamwork, so that their living standards advance continually and their buying provides a growing market." *Economic Outlook* develops the same position in an argument directed against the idea that corporations must make and retain huge profits "to keep themselves in business and to provide jobs for the workers," and it sums up by declaring for the alternative of "low prices and high wages, with moderate profits to be used primarily for fair dividend payments."

The argument seems to be that profits are dependent upon prices high in relation to wages, and furthermore, that a corporation can fix the level

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of prices high in respect to wages on its own initiative, and that it is also possible for the management and labor union in a corporation to work out a mutually acceptable relation between wages and prices which would result in an agreed level of profits. Finally, such an agreed balancing of wages, prices and profits could result in prosperity, so that "living standards advance continually."

This viewpoint, and the various counter-viewpoints opposing it, are not, most importantly, scientific propositions that can be solved by mathematics and experiment. The problem is not primarily a technical, economic one; more practically it is a question of morale and the over-all acceptance or rejection by people and groups of the business system and the methods and organization of our business enterprise. There is currently widespread discontent with the distribution of gross corporation incomes and with the processes by which the distribution is settled. The most serious alienation is in the labor union movement, but owners and managers tend also toward discontent and change.

Both the AFL and CIO recognize in certain connections that prices, employment and the level of production in this country are strongly affected by the foreign aid program and government defense expenditures. But neither the big unions, nor bosses, nor the general unidentified public seem eager to face the fact that the aid and defense programs must check "the standard of living" in America. That *continual* advance President Green talks about, materially impossible in the long run at any rate, because of the limitations of nature, is bound to be checked right away if ERP and the Army, Navy and Air Force are going to be dealt with seriously. The problem to face is how to create and spread around the curtailed goods and services. The situation would be quite improper unless every class had a complaint; none ought to develop paranoia.

The two union papers mentioned here both emphasize again the trend in labor to seek responsibility in management and in general economic administration. The wage-earning class is loath to stick to its traditional rôle. But the whole thing is being scrambled. The supposed enterprisers of industry also are looking for a position which is not traditionally theirs in the classic play of capitalism. As the CIO points out, "The corporations are actually saying that profits must be high enough to provide dollars for expansion in inventories and factories. Traditionally . . . the business theory of capitalism has never said this." Businessmen and investors who should be taking the chances and responsibilities on the expectation of getting fat dividends are working instead for a limited income type of security. Individual investors turn over their money to big corporations—equity and common stock being more and more like loans: "The relatively few individuals controlling the major groups of corporations are today deciding in large measure how much America should save and what should be done with these savings. When profits were paid out in dividends, the stockholders were, individually, making those decisions. Today, the Board of Directors is doing the deciding. These huge surpluses are also making it almost impossible for new firms to gain a foothold in basic industry." The owning class does not seem to want the responsibilities traditionally attached to property.

The CIO makes the very fertile observation that "the real reason people with money are not flocking to the stock market is because they are afraid of another depression." And it is fear of another depression which makes wage earners without money distrust private enterprise, even during these years of relative across-the-board boom. People seem to look for defense and protection either to the State or to an idol of the big corporation. Management's efforts to plow back profits, hold up dividends, establish every sort of reserve, constantly simplify and reduce the debt and capital structure, raise prices, check wages, all go to build up a corporation that can weather any storm. The corporation gets to exist apart from all the people concerned, and the owners, wage workers and consuming public must sacrifice their gain and benefit in order to strengthen the financial resources and permanent capital equipment of the company. In fear of depression, the great leveler, individuals entrust more and more of their property and decision to the Leviathan corporation. People turn toward that and toward the State, one way or another, with various degrees of abandon. In this country, both "capital" and "labor" go both directions at once, with labor of course going more to the State, and capital more to the Corporation—but the directions and velocities are not set and certain. Labor appears no enemy of bigness in business, and business relies increasingly on government.

Both strong tendencies are away from effective private property and personal, direct responsibility. Their objective is an ever-less-demanding physical security. The impulse is negative. So long as this is true, the quarrels over wages and prices and profits appear decidedly secondary. The means which all sides are using in the economic struggle seems to lead toward the creation of immense economic pyramids. These industrial bulwarks could be more or less dominated by the administrative towers of the State, but the people, devoting more and more of their lives and property and freedom to enlarging and polishing the mysterious and abstract pyramids of material security, would likely be unconcerned by the title of the man balancing on top or buried in the center.

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TVA's H. A. Morgan

Made the TVA safe for the Tennessee Valley

James Rorty

IN MAY of this year an eighty-year-old entomologist will lay aside the unprecedented and extraordinary responsibilities he assumed fifteen years ago, in collaboration with a middle-aged Ohio construction engineer and a young public utilities lawyer from Wisconsin. H. A. Morgan was one of Franklin D. Roosevelt's original appointees to the three-man Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the others being A. E. Morgan and David E. Lilienthal.

Largely because of his consistent aversion to publicity—almost the only authentic aversion of this sort that this writer has encountered in public life—the great public outside the Valley rarely heard of Dr. Morgan. When they did, he was usually referred to as "the Tennessee Morgan" to distinguish him from the first chairman of the Board, to whom, incidentally, he is not related.

As a matter of fact, Harcourt Alexander Morgan is neither a Tennessean nor a Southerner by birth, but a Canadian of Irish descent. He is, however, a Southerner by firm adoption, since he came south when he was 22 years old and at the time of his appointment to the TVA had lived in the south longer than most people who were born there.

In 1905, when Morgan forsook his cattle tick and boll weevil investigations in Louisiana to become at 37 the director of the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station and a teacher of biology at the university, he had already rounded out a distinguished career in the South as one of the pioneer entomologists, microbe hunters, and hunger fighters of his generation. By the time the TVA was established he had completed a second career as an educator who took a starved and rundown land-grant college, in a state that was still crippled by the divided political inheritance of the Civil War, and made it into the vigorous and prosperous institution that the University of Tennessee soon became.

The TVA was Morgan's third career, and his unique and indispensable contribution to its success became his greatest achievement.

In July, 1933, a few weeks after the organzation of the TVA, the entomologist and the utilities lawyer heard the Board chairman, the able, zealous and politically naive construction engineer, expound his grim technocratic blueprint for doing the people of the Tennessee Valley a lot of good in a hurry and making them like it. Neither Lilienthal nor H. A. Morgan could see that kind of a bureaucratic mandate in the law, and both were convinced it wouldn't work anyway. Morgan, because of his long experience in Tennessee, knew exactly why it wouldn't work; why a decentralized program, involving a deliberate sharing of responsibility with the land-grant colleges and other state and local agencies, would be better in terms of both short-term politics and long-term engineering.

In the subsequent struggle that ended with the President's dismissal of A. E. Morgan for "contumacy" and the appointment of "Tennessee" Morgan as chairman of the Board, Lilienthal, the lawyer, fought for the democratic, decentralized program of H. A. Morgan, the entomologist and ecologist. Lilienthal made his own contributions to this program, extended it, and administered it. But it was H. A. Morgan who in that early crisis, so nearly fatal to the TVA, made the TVA safe for the Tennessee Valley, and the country, by insisting on the "grass-roots" administrative procedure. As it later developed, that policy became not only TVA's refuge in time of trouble, but almost the essence of its contribution to the huge and still unsolved problem of how to utilize the modern technology democratically to serve democratic ends.

★

Harcourt Alexander Morgan was born August 31, 1867, at Kerrwod, Ontario, Canada. His paternal grandfather emigrated from Tyrone, Ireland, shortly after the turn of the century, and staked out a claim in the Ontario homestead territory that was later to become the town of Petrolia. For some reason, however, he failed to file on his claim, hence missed striking it rich for his heirs and descendants. In the opinion of his grandson this was a fortunate accident, nature having other and better genetic blueprints for the Morgan stock than to become millionaires by inheritance.

During Morgan's boyhood the frontier of settlement was still not far away. Migrating Indians often camped in the neighborhood. On one oc-

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casion a mob of tribesmen got drunk and chased young Morgan and his schoolmates into the schoolhouse. There they were besieged all day until rescued by Morgan senior, who used a long rawhide whip to enforce his authority as magistrate.

After attending the Strathroy Institute, Morgan entered the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, which was connected with the University of Toronto. In 1889 he received his diploma as Bachelor of Science from William Muloch, the then Chancellor of Toronto University. Guelph and the agricultural college at East Lansing, Michigan, were the original "cow colleges"—so designated by the disdainful representatives of the Higher Learning in America. Both were established in advance of the states' acceptance of the Morrill Act in 1862 which created the land-grant colleges. Both were excellent institutions whose graduates were greatly in demand to fill the experiment station positions in these colleges when the passage of the Hatch Act in 1887 made possible their rapid expansion. Morgan's first job as professor of entomology and horticulture (zoology was added later) at Louisiana State University came to him by a process of natural selection that automatically eliminated the graduates of the Yankee schools but found nothing objectionable about a Canadian who looked and talked like a Britisher.

Louisiana in 1889 had quantities of bugs in its fields and some excellent classical scholars in its colleges. But it had almost no properly trained entomologists except Morgan, whose initial efforts at Baton Rouge were regarded with a certain reserve.

"What does Mr. Morgan do in that . . . er . . . rather smelly laboratory of his?" inquired the ladies at the teas.

"I beleve he feeds bugs."

"Really! And what does his assistant do?"

"You know, I believe his assistant feeds bugs too!"

Morgan and his assistant fed as many bugs in their laboratory as his $50-a-year initial expense account would allow. They also swept the lawns and shrubbery of the campus and the neighboring fields with their nets, while classes were suspended so that the students could watch the show.

It wasn't funny from the point of view of Morgan and the farmers he was trying to serve. At that moment the agriculture of Louisiana, and in fact of most of the South, was fighting a losing battle with insect enemies, the cattle tick and later the boll weevil being the most lethal. The tick alone was costing Southern cattle raisers an estimated $40,000,000 a year. Not only was the tick a damaging parasite; it transmitted an often fatal disease.

Before the Experiment Stations of the South had done much to control the tick, the boll weevil struck in Texas and precipitated a serious agricultural dilemma. The onward eastern march of the boll weevil was forcing the farmers out of cotton and they saw nowhere else to go; until the tick was eliminated they could raise only unprofitable, parasitized, 600-pound tick-infested cows that gave "blue John milk."

In 1903 the Governor of Louisiana sent Morgan into Texas, and on the basis of his report the legislature authorized the creation of a Crop Pest Commission, of which he was appointed executive director. The Commission was given an appropriation of $75,000 to fight the weevil and pay cotton planters not to raise cotton on a thirty-mile strip from Arkansas to the Gulf, although in the end the USDA paid the bill on the reasonable ground that the boll weevil was more than a state or regional problem. In addiiton to being paid for not planting cotton, the planters had also to be persuaded; so Morgan jounced the back roads in buggies and on horseback. Once that summer he found himself facing an armed band of unco-operative farmers, but successfully talked himself out of trouble. Doubtless his Canadian accent helped; at least he wasn't a damnyankee. Moreover, he was recognizably a born and bred farmer, able to talk farmer talk and win the confidence of simple people.

Ironically, the quarantine succeeded by failing. It enabled Morgan and others to establish a previously unknown phase of the life history-habits of the weevil, including its annual dispersions. Instead of hopping from plant to plant and field to field, the weevils would zoom up and fly a hundred miles. By establishing this fact, the quarantine ended quarantines, and directed attention toward the modern preventives of dusting and planting early varieties of cotton.

In the summers, Morgan went to Woods Hole, Massachusetts, or to Cornell to study with Comstock, dean of American entomologists. Twice Comstock visited Morgan in Louisiana. Morgan found time to study with Comstock; time to visit the laboratories in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts, where a group of entomologists were assembling from all over the world parasites that they hoped might rid the East of the imported gypsy and brown tail moths; time for a trip into the Bitter-root Valley of Montana to investigate the Rocky Mountain fever tick. He found time to serve successively as entomologist for the State Experiment Station, special field agent at times of the United States Bureau of Entomology, and president of the Louisiana Naturalists Society. He found time to persuade reluctant legislatures into passing desperately needed legislation, an art at which he displayed an early aptitude. But he never did find time to write a doctor's dissertation, although he had done far more than the required laboratory and field work.

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In 1905 Morgan transferred his activities to Tennessee, at the request of Brown Ayres, who had just been called to the presidency of the University of Tennessee from the deanship at Tulane. As director of the Agricultural Experiment Station at Knoxville, Morgan had everything to do over again, in a state that had long been almost equally ravaged by the uncontrolled forces of nature and a special kind of intense border-state politics. Agriculturally, the state was dvided into three parts: the cotton fields of West Tennessee, the blue grass pastures of the Middle Tennessee Basin, and the mixed crop hill farms of East Tennessee. Politically, Tennessee was split between the East Tennessee Republicans and the descendants of the slave-holding planters of Middle and West Tennessee, who still nursed the wounds inflicted during the Reconstruction period.

Again, as in Louisiana, the limiting factor in a complex problem of human ecology was political. To save Tennessee's eroding hill farms and provide the farm people with a diet a little more varied and nourishing than the traditional fatback and grits, it would be necessary to induce the farmers to stop planting corn on eight, ten and even on thirty-degree slopes, to improve their gullied pastures with lime and phosphate, and to raise more and better cattle, now that the tick was on the way out. The region's fifty-two inches of annual rainfall must be used to grow grass nad legume cover that would prevent the soil from being washed downhill into the Gulf of Mexico. Capturing the water where it fell would not only send a clearer stream through the generators: it would pay off in crop production.

Ecologically and practically, what was required was education at the grass roots that would build popular support in the rural counties for progressive legislators in Nashville; in short, votes, which Morgan accordingly set out to get. It took him over a decade to change the picture. During those years Morgan visited every county in the state, talked to thousands of farmers, and visited in their homes. One of his former students recalls that chapter of Morgan's career.

"Everywhere he'd go, the farmers would follow him around like children. He'd wave his arms and preach and if there was a revival going on the folks would like as not run out on the evangelist and come to listen to the Doc. What he preached was the same thing he preached to his classes, the same thing he still preaches. That the land was being 'whupped down' and washed away by 52 inches of rain, 6,000 tons falling on every acre every year, on steep fields that have no complete winter freeze-up as in the North. That the clover would come back if you put lime and phosphate on the pastures. That it was a man's duty to keep his land covered and save it for his children; that it was his God-given privilege to match the provisions of nature with the contributions of man. It's nothing but agronomic horse sense, but it sounds like religion when the Doc talks it and the farmers ate it up.

"They listened to him and they did what he told them to do. I used to ask them why, and they said it was because he seemed so worried about them and about the land. And of course he was. He's never worried about anything else, and after a while the people got to understand that. So that when the Doc says he wants something done for the land they know he doesn't want it for himself."

There was the time, many years ago, when a group of farmers tried to give Morgan an automobile. They had it all bought and paid for with tens and fives and dollar bills they'd collected from dirt-poor folks, some of whom had never seen as much as a hundred dollars at one time in their lives. Then, when the committee drove that shiny new Model T up to his door, the Doc wouldn't take it.

"They were about the maddest bunch of farmers I ever did see," recalls the county agent who witnessed this episode. "'But don't you understand, Doc,' they kept yelling. 'If you got this car you could get out to see us more. That's all we want.' That was all they did want, too. They didn't mean any harm. But the Doc wouldn't take that automobile any more than, a few years later when he was president of the university, he would take the nomination for governor of the state."

The conventional politicians who remember that refusal still stutter with bewilderment. Tennessee is an agricultural state and Morgan almost certainly could have been elected; the farmers would have swum the fords if necessary to vote for him. But being governor of the state had no place in Morgan's dream or in his philosophy.

"Why, I'd rather have got me a tin bill and pecked dirt with the chickens the rest of my life," he exclaims somewhat irascibly in recalling that affair. "If I'd accepted, they'd have said, 'So that is what he's been playing for all the time. Just another educator-politician.'"

★

Instead of becoming governor of the state, Morgan became the lifelong friend of the man who did become governor: Austin Peay, who, during his election campaign, switched from active opposition to Morgan's educational program to unqualified and eloquent support. What happened was that Peay walked into Morgan's office with the intention of heckling the educator and getting campaign material.

"You've got a typewritten list of questions in your pocket," charged Morgan, who was guessing

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astutely. "And they're the wrong questions too. If you'll come back after lunch I'll try to show you what the right questions are and then try to answer them. I'm sorry that it would not be appropriate for the president of the university to ask a candidate for governor to lunch."

Furious but impressed—he did have a typewritten list of questions in his pocket—as he admitted three years later—Peay returned after lunch and spent the afternoon being trotted over the university farm at Morgan's characteristic breakneck pace, listening to a peripatetic lecture on the agricultural, ecological, economic and educational problems of the state. In subsequent speeches Peay reversed his position, pledged himself to expand the facilities of the university, and after his election made good on his promises—despite the unfortunate interruption of the Scopes "monkey trial."

Neither Morgan nor Peay were at first disturbed when, in 1925, a fundamentalist legislator read "The Origin of Species" for the first time and introduced a bill outlawing the teaching of "evolution" in the schools; not even when the rural legislators refused to pass pending legislation to extend the school term and increase appropriations for the state university until the Governor signed the anti-evolution bill. Morgan had been teaching biology to Tennessee farmers, in the classroom and in the field, for twenty years, without inhibitions and without any interference whatever. The Governor was confident when he signed the bill that it would never be applied.

But the publicity seekers had other ideas, and soon William Jennings Bryan and Clarence Darrow were waging their opera bouffe battle, that seemed half faked at the time, on the lawn in front of the courthouse in Dayton.

Morgan declined to become involved. When ardent liberals urged that it was his duty to stand at Armageddon and do battle for the 1859 edition of "The Origin of Species," Morgan fumed privately—and said nothing for publication. When a valiant young instructor asked melodramatically: "But what shall I teach?" Morgan is alleged to have snapped: "So you've discovered Darwin too! Don't be silly. Teach the truth. Teach what we've been teaching. And don't imagine that either God or Darwin has called on you to hurt the religious sensibilities of our farm boys."

★

When the TVA Act was passed in the spring of 1933, Morgan's appointment to the Board of Directors of the Authority was pretty much in the cards from the beginning. In the first place, he possessed to a unique degree the confidence of the people of his adopted South; and it was the South that would be most affected by the comprehensive program of flood control, navigation improvement, power development, fertilizer research, and agricultural rehabilitation for water control envisaged by the Act.

In the second place he was better prepared by training and experience than either of his associates to draw the theoretical blueprints of a complex piece of physical and social construction for which there were no precedents, no models, no textbook formulae. Better, probably, than anybody else the President could have found, the 65-year-old ecologist was equipped to see the job whole, keep it whole, and preach the gospel of that wholeness to the people of the Valley and of the nation.

While practical engineers, agronomists, foresters, and other technicians attacked the tactical problems of their several assignments, Morgan devoted himself to the larger questions of theory and strategy. In furiously scribbled diagrams and impassioned speech he attacked the fragmentation and compartmentalization of problems and the "craft-mindedness" of the specialists who, by their very energy and zeal, were imperiling the hope of a unified program.

"What is a watershed?" asked Morgan, and characteristically, as a biologist, answered, "An organism." A complex but unified composite of life systems, one of which consisted of the human life found in the watershed: its numbers, habits, knowledge, skills, technologies, institutions. Congress had given the TVA a comprehensive assignment to restore the ecological balance of the Tennessee watershed, which had been impaired by its human occupants, this impairment manifesting itself outside the Valley by such phenomena as the floods that wrought havoc along the lower Mississippi. That was what the dams and the power and the fertilizer were for: to bring the contributions of man to bear on the provisions of nature and thereby raise the total ecology to a new and higher level.

"Remember, the dams are just the circus elephants. Don't you fellows get to thinking they're the whole TVA show," Morgan would declaim, shaking an admonitory finger at the engineers. "Before an intelligent program for utilizing the resources of the Tennessee Valley can be devised, we must define and classify these resources, both natural and human, in their ecological relationships. You start with the inexhaustible elements of the air and water, and the exhaustible minerals, especially phosphate, of the soil, and you end with the knowledge and skills and machinery and institutions of man. The truth that sets men free is to be found in the knowledge science gives us of man's natural environment."

At this point in his lectures Morgan would turn to his blackboard and draw the primitive versions of the charts and diagrams which he later

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developed as teaching materials for what became known as the Common Mooring Concept. He would do the same thing in personal interviews. Hardboiled newspaper reporters, told to make Morgan talk about the rumored internal conflicts of the Board, came away completely frustrated, their pockets stuffed with the guileless ancient's scribbled hieroglyphics, and irked by the suspicion that they had been taken for a philosophical skyride.

In 1935 a hostile House Military Affairs Committee let itself in for a similar experience when it summoned Dr. H. A. to the stand one afternoon with the intention of subjecting the venerable scientist to the same sort of verbal third degree it had administered to the other members of the TVA triumvirate that morning. Years later Senator Lister Hill recalled with enjoyment what happened on that memorable occasion:

"We had a blackboard and chalk and pointer in the committee room. With these familiar classroom props, Dr. Morgan commenced a lecture on phosphate. Formula followed formula on the blackboard, erased in rapid sequence to the committee's confusion and the reporters' despair. Circles were drawn and connected. Lines ran from one side to another to make diagrams and symbols. It was at once terribly obscure and wonderfully clear. . . ."

The lecture was in effect an ecologist's reply to the Committee's question: what was the TVA preparing to do for the protection of the country in the event of war? It lasted nearly an hour and a half and seemingly was concluded only because Dr. Morgan ran out of chalk. Legend has it that afterward a committee member buttonholed Morgan in the lobby.

"It was wonderful, Dr. Morgan," testified the dazed statesman. "Most remarkable exposition I ever heard. Never been so convinced of anything in my life. It's just that—well, I'd give my right arm to know what I'm convinced *of*."

Morgan's associates are convinced, too, but considerably less bemused. They are convinced that far from being a visionary mystic, Morgan is an exceedingly tough-minded individual who has repeatedly shown a firmer and more prescient grasp of critical administrative problems than has many a so-called "practical" administrator. They are also convinced that despite his protestations Morgan has no intention of vegetating when his term as TVA director expires in May. Recently he has unveiled some new and improved versions of his Common Mooring charts. He has also done some preliminary outlines of an ecological history of the cotton economy of the South, and some original and challenging work on the classification of human resources. Knowing Morgan, they suspect that at eighty he is planning a fourth career.

Herr Sisyphus

A short sociological treatise on Tartarus*

Elizabeth Langgässer

NOW is the time to speak of Herr Sisyphus. Herr Sisyphus can be found in every corner and in all the zones of the City. The City is Tartarus. Her streets are inhabited by rats, dogs, sparrows, cats and the Sisyphides. The streets are full of noises; the tooting of cars, the rattling of street cars, the shrieking of brakes, the whistle of locomotives and an assortment of sighs, oaths, curses and wild laughter. These noises in the dark streets, mean life to the Sisyphides; but above all, to this far-flung and prolific family, life means the incessant click of brick on brick. The rhythm is of the tireless brick-gathering of the Sisyphus women, who, optimistically and eternally, pile up the bricks in shimmering piles, row upon row of them, according to some crazy Master

Translator's Note: The translator's knowledge of German is limited to a three-months' sojourn in Mecklenberg-Schwerin in 1912. This is, therefore, of necessity, a so-called "free" translation. The translator has not the slightest idea what "Tekse" are. Perhaps they are railroad ties. The translator chose "raw hides" arbitrarily, as the context seemed to call for something difficult for Grandpa to bring back from Kotzchenbroda. Any complaints from our readers as to the incompetence of this translation should be accompanied by substantial checks to a "Commonweal Fund." This will enable THE COMMONWEAL to hire competent translators in the future. —GABRIELLE CHANDLER.

So long as Mrs. Chandler will do such translating, substantial checks sent in appreciation for work well done could be happily spent in search of other good documents for her to translate . . . and to furnish a gift subscription to the first reader who proves to us what "Tekse" *are.* —THE EDITORS.

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Plan. Hoping thereby, some day, to build a better Necropolis. The Sisyphides love stones, and set their hopes on them. They expect their beloved stones to build a better future for them, and to deliver them from their present hard lot. They call it, according to their temperaments, either their "God-imposed lot" or a fate imposed on them by a mystical entity that they call Destiny. They try to cover it up with the same drab lack of feeling with which they struggle through their work with the stones and the everlasting grinding out of their food, which consists of sawdust and aromas.

To be sure, if the stones could talk, or if the piles of bricks were actually altars along the roadsides, engraved with suitable inscriptions, or if, touched by the finger of the Ultimate Divinity, be he Zeus or Jehovah, their pores were opened to the Truth, and testified to that Truth, by screaming out the truth of the corporate guilt of all the Sisyphides, their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. If this should happen, it would unsettle the peace of mind of the City, and perhaps even the peace of mind of the Children of the Gods, who criss-cross the City, in their glittering chrome-plated cars. The Children of the Gods, who came from the East, the West or the North-West, are beloved by the inhabitants of this strange City, as much as are the stones, or at least, they are prayed to as much. While the Children of the Gods from the East, live in the Eastern Zone; those from the West and Southwest, live in the Northwestern and Western zones. Herr Sisyphus who lives on the corner of the Landsberger Alee & the Petersburger Strasse; Herr Sisyphus who lives at the crossing of the Winschied and Kant Strasse; Herr Sisyphus who lives where the Badstrasse cuts across the Prinzenstrasse, all try to resemble the Protective Deities of their zones, by answering their phone with either "Hello" or "Alo," or, returning from a turnip-hunt in the City, boast that one of the Eastern Gods, or, more accurately, Sons of Gods, spoke to him, and gave him a potato ration stamp at the Inter-zonal customs barrier. The relation between Gods and Sisyphides, can only be described by such mythological allegories as, for instance, the golden rain that fell on Danae. It is entirely regulated by the Bureaus.

The Bureaus are the go-betweens between the distant Gods and the Sisyphides who are bowed down to earth with stones. They take on part of the nature of the former by their omnipotence, coldness, and lack of understanding, and of the nature of the latter, in a sort of Sisyphidian impotence and an extraordinary lack of individuality. The Bureaus try to grind out decrees for some of the various necessities; such as Sisyphus I's need of a permit to operate a hand-organ, Sisyphus II's need for an artificial leg; Sisyphus III's travel permit to migrate to another zone of the City, and Sisyphus IV's urgent need of a new roof for his house, through which the rain pours, and from whose cellar walls a ghostly mould is climbing higher day and night.

Now is the time for the poet who accompanies the Sisyphidian shadows in the horrible secret silence of Tartarus, to sing the song of the Rubber Stamp Hunt. Let no one maintain that this Song of the Rubber Stamp is more unreal than the adventures of the long-suffering Odysseus, and that it belongs in the realm of fable, invention and lies, rather than to reality. Tartarus is actually a place that can only be described in poetic terms, and by observing reactions —similar to the acid and alkali reactions of litmus paper—rather than by realistic descriptions of what one sees there.

★

Let us begin with Sisyphus IV and his ruined roof. For two years he has been going the rounds of the appropriate Bureaus, trying to convince them of the urgency of his need to have it repaired. To no avail. Finally, in despair, but without the necessary permit; but armed with every imaginable identification paper, he decides to get permission to repair it himself. He goes back to the Building Bureau, and is delighted to see that it, at least, is freshly papered and painted and all its window panes intact. Herr Sisyphus is asked what type of wall finish his house has, was it bombed or destroyed by vandals? Was it his property or did he steal it? Was it allotted to him, or did he rent it? How many sub-tenants and how many children? What ages? How long in Tartarus? Arrival and departure from what Zones? After Herr Sisyphus proves that he is alive; that he is registered; that he has the necessary identification papers; the householder's card, the soap card, the coal ration card, his children's birth certificates, the death certificate of his mother-in-law—who, because of the incessant rains developed inflammation of the lungs and died, and, being dead, required only the one and ultimate card. Herr Sisyphus was brutally told, that neither the permission to repair, nor the necessary roofing paper, tiles, tar and cement would be forthcoming, but perhaps Herr Sisyphus had some pith-leather or raw hides which he would be willing to trade in for some black market cement, roofing paper and tar? "Come on, Herr Sisyphus. Yes or No?" Herr Sisyphus faced with this new approach suddenly remembers that his aged father-in-law originally came from a farm in Kotzchenbroda in Thuringia, where raw hides are plentiful. Grandpa must be sent to get raw hides, so that the Building Bureau will hand over tiles, tar and cement in exchange. But in order to get the hides, Grandpa must get a travel

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permit to Kotzchenbroda. It is self-evident that the poor old man will never come home alive. Actually, after standing in the ticket line for two days, with his rucksack filled to bursting point with various articles, including toilet paper, identification papers, several boxes of cough-drops, and a character reference; he finally gets his ticket and falls dead of a stroke. Whereupon, the man in the line behind him moves up one place.

This man is Herr Sisyphus I, who now comes into our story. Sisyphus I is a politically suspect organ-grinder, who has been told to present himself in his place of origin for de-nazification. He also, as a one-legged man, holds a permit to purchase an artificial leg. He steals dead Grandpa's political character testimonial, and gives the permit to buy hides in Kotzchenbroda, to the man behind him in the line, who has witnessed the thievery, and gives him chewing gum, cigarettes, and a small bottle of methylated spirits, for household use, in exchange. This next man in line, is Herr Sisyphus III, who now has an extra travel permit available for exchange in some future transaction, and steps out of the ticket line. Herr Sisyphus III, we must remember, wanted to migrate from one zone to another, in order to join his bride in the Russian Zone (actually a matter of a few blocks); but as he is not properly registered as a resident of the zone he is living in, it will be easier for him to go to Kotzchenbroda, and remain there seven months, and establish his residence, before applying again for a permit to migrate to the Russian Zone. He goes to Kotzchenbroda, and sits there for seven months, and returns to the same ticket line to find very little change in it. Perhaps it is a trifle shorter. However, his bride with the approach of child-birth gets herself admitted to the "Mother Joy" hospital in the American Zone, armed with a certificate from her doctor that she is not suffering too acutely from either gall or kidney stones. Her child is born in the American Zone, she lives in the Russian Zone, and her husband is still not properly registered in the British Zone. This family's situation resembles one of those portraits by Picasso, where the face faces in three directions at once.

Let us leave this sad picture. The mother, as soon as she is well enough, moves into the cellar of Sisyphus II, a vegetable vendor, who, like the organ-grinder, has been waiting for an artificial leg for two years. She quickly exchanges her infant ration card for the extra travel permit of Sisyphus I, with whom Sisyphus II has exchanged his artificial limb permit, for potatoes, and, in turn, exchanged the potatoes for the infant ration card of Sisyphus III. With his new artificial limb permit, Sisyphus II hobbles off to the Health Bureau, and tries to prove that although the permit is for a left leg, he needs it for his right leg. Alas! the whole swindle comes to light. There are cries of "fraud! fraud!" Poor Sisyphus II, in his confusion, chops off his other leg, without, thereby, getting the necessary "sickness permit." Sisyphus I, has to give up the organ-grinder's permit, and Sisyphus III rushes back to Kotzchenbroda with his wife and baby, whose ration card she has traded. Herr Sisyphus IV now steps to the head of the line, and drops dead. The man next in line steals all his papers, and trades them with his widow for her house with the still unrepaired roof. The house is roofless, but comes with a fine coat of mould.

So live the Sisyphides in this tragic City. They clench their hands like children making snowballs; but their fists contain nothing but paper. This paper actually is the stone which the Sisyphides are forever rolling to the summit, and which, after all their trouble, rolls back on them. But if they didn't have even that occupation to fill their time, they might begin to doubt that they were still alive, and think they were already actually dead.

Communications

REGARDING DOROTHY DAY'S POSITION

Montreal, P. Q.

TO the Editors: If my memory serves me, Péguy in many of his outbursts failed to do justice to *all* groups in whatever action he happened to be condemning. Dorothy Day, as we all know, is among the pioneers in pacifism, which is very slowly emerging in our not-yet Christian civilization. Her horror at *pious* talk about a third war (in face of atomic bombs, and of the spiritual disintegration which has followed World War No. II) is surely understandable. Many of your readers will forgive her the generalization to which THE COMMONWEAL took exception.

MADELEINE SHERIDAN.

Providence, Rhode Island.

TO the Editors: While it may be possible historically to formulate a theology of war, the issues of the present conflict in the battle of ideologies are clear enough to warrant the "root" claims of Miss Dorothy Day in her recent letter to THE COMMONWEAL.

War is blindly selfish, all that hatred can give; all that love lacks. Yalta and subsequent dealings in power financial politics has proved it so. A sincere individual, naively so, may participate in battle with the hopes of making a better world, freeing a nation, eradicating hatred or other positive values. He or she may display heroic bravery worthy of the stuff of martyrs. That a noble soul and pure heart should choose such an ignoble means for the accomplishment of its aims leads one to question the Christian interpretation of ends and means. But even this is not the essential issue.

The question of war is more a problem of "being"

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than of "acting." As such, in its human aspects it is a total all-out effort of the worst that is in man, i.e., the best of the devil. It is always an action against something rather than an action for something. It is destructive of the better things of the world while the more ignoble often manage to survive.

Do you think the present war has helped or will help civilization and culture? Do you really think that our own service men wanted to go to war? Divine Providence allows good to come from every catastrophe, of course, but Miss Day's letter concerned the very human basic elements of war which are hateful, devilish; not divine.

JAMES F. SHIEL.

A CATHOLIC HISTORIAN

Cambridge, Mass.

TO the Editors: In THE COMMONWEAL of May 21, 1948, page 146, the Rev. F. D. Cohalan stated in his review of Lillian P. Wallace's "The Papacy and European Diplomacy," *1869-1878:*

> This book will be very useful to students of modern Church history and should stimulate the writing of further studies in English, including some from the strictly Catholic viewpoint. The latter are necessary because even the most unbiased non-Catholic has difficulty in understanding the universal outlook of the Vatican, of which its diplomacy is only one expression, and can all too easily make the mistake of confusing the instrument with the policy it exists to serve.

Without intending to challenge all of Father Cohalan's article, I do think certain statements in the above quotation need further analysis. For, is there a Catholic viewpoint of history, and are Catholics alone capable of giving competent treatment to the institutional aspects of Catholicism?

In the first place, a sincere and intellectually honest Catholic can never treat the dogmatic beliefs of his religion as other than absolute truth. Nor, when he constructs a philosophy of history, analyzing history metaphysically to discover its meaning and purpose, can he go beyond the bounds set by Catholic philosophy and theology.

But when a Catholic attempts to treat of history in the technical sense, trying to recreate a picture of the past, properly weighing the forces, ideas, and institutions that made up the pattern of a certain era or series of eras, I do not think that there can properly be a Catholic viewpoint.

Here, the historian is trying to see a particular time as it was, with the interplay of the various factors influencing it. The position of the Catholic Church as an institution affecting a particular period must thus be viewed without exaggerating or minimizing its proper place or influence. What Father Cohalan protests against is, I believe, that too frequently historians give a false picture due to a lack of correct perspective. Any historian treating any field of history must have an understanding, a certain intimate sympathy and comprehension of his subject. For instance, a student might master the Chinese language and then learn a great deal about Chinese history from books in that tongue, making all his studies in the United States; but he would never be able to interpret China's history with certainty until he understood the real meaning of Chinese customs, Chinese institutions, and the Chinese mentality by actual intimate contact.

This makes it harder for a non-Catholic than a Catholic to appreciate the Church's position at a given time and in a given place, but it does not make it impossible. The best study of the English Catholics under Queen Elizabeth was made by a German Protestant, Arnold Oskar Meyer, and those fortunate enough to have studied under Charles H. McIlwain know his great appreciation of and sympathy for things Catholic.

Nevertheless, there is a school of writers which claims to give a Catholic interpretation to history, of whom one of the most influential is Hilaire Belloc. These writers posit as their premise that the only good society is one based on and integrated by Catholic principles, and judge all cultures in the light of this norm. Without discussing the question of a Catholic culture, I think such writing is a perversion of history, because it introduces a subjective, a polemical element, which attempts to make history not a branch of knowledge to be studied for itself, as is chemistry, mathematics, or linguistics, but a branch of apologetics. If history is an attempt to understand the past correctly, each part of the mosaic which forms a past age must be fitted in as correctly as the historian can honestly vision it, and no part, whether religious, economic, social, cultural should be distorted. Yet, that is what a preconceived bias does.

It is true that no writer of history is without some prejudices, small or large, for no one is completely objective. But good scholarship demands that the historian try to control these to arrive at as truthful and correct a presentation as possible. Catholics, for that reason, must be careful in accepting, as authoritative, writers of the Belloc school, provocative and interesting though their works may be.

What Father Cohalan really urges, I believe, is not a Catholic viewpoint in history, such as I have just criticized, but better standards of scholarship in historiography and a greater realization by historians of their responsibilities. This is a challenge which our American institutions of higher learning, Catholic and others, must accept, and determine, both on the undergraduate and graduate levels, how they can improve the training they are giving students of history.

WILLIAM R. TRIMBLE.

Mr. Trimble's admirable letter emphasizes a position taken by Pope Leo XIII when he opened the Vatican archives to all. Lord Acton, the "man without a book," was probably the originator of the practice of positing history as a branch of objective knowledge—a habit as alien to his contemporaries J. R. Green or Bishop Stubbs as to Josephus or Gibbon or Gregorovius, although it is generally conceded today. Father de Lubac's forthcoming study of Proudhon is a good example of objective historical writing by a Catholic; and it is to be hoped that Mr. Trimble's arguments will stimulate many more. —THE EDITORS.

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CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL NEWS

INDONESIA MOVING TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

Rome, 6/5 (CIP)—"From a political point of view, the situation in Indonesia presents today the picture of a continuous evolution towards complete independence," *Archbishop George de Jonghe d'Ardoya,* Apostolic Delegate for the Indonesian Archipelago, told a CIP correspondent on his arrival in Rome from Batavia. The Archbishop was born in Belgium and was appointed to his present position in June, 1947.

CATHOLIC COLLEGES IN INDONESIAN REPUBLIC

Batavia, 6/1 (CIP)—The St. Ignatius College of Philosophy run by the Jesuit Fathers at Djokjakarta, capital of the Republic of Indonesia, recently celebrated its 25th anniversary under the presidency of *Bishop Albert Soegijapranata, S.J.,* Vicar Apostolic of Semarang. The Bishop praised the College's achievements, especially for the training of native priests, and welcomed the presence at the ceremony of two Cabinet Ministers of the Indonesian Republic as well as the representative of the third. The Minister of Religious Affairs, a Moslem, was one of the speakers at the ceremony.

The number of native priests is constantly increasing in all parts of Indonesia. The first native priest from the Daya people in Central Borneo, *Father Aloysius Ding,* was recently ordained at Singkawang. At his first Mass, a Chinese priest, *Father Pacificus Bong,* preached in both Malay and Chinese. A dinner held in his honor was attended by all 25 Daya members of the police force of Singkawang.

POPE RECEIVES AMBASSADOR MARITAIN IN FAREWELL AUDIENCE

Rome, 6/1 (CIP)—*Jacques Maritain,* the famous scholastic philosopher who has served as French Ambassador to the Vatican since May 10, 1945, was received by Pope Pius XII for a farewell audience, May 26. He resigned recently and is planning to return to Paris in June. Professor Maritain has not yet announced when he will go to America to join the faculty of Princeton University, where he has accepted a professorship in philosophy.

Professor Maritain's successor has not yet been appointed, but there is a rumor that the French Government is considering Professor Charles Fleury, President of the Semaines Sociales (Social Study Weeks) of the French Catholics. Professor Fleury, a former National Chairman of the Catholic Youth Association of France, played a prominent rôle in the anti-Nazi resistance movement. In 1944 the French Government sent him to the Vatican on a semi-official mission to discuss diplomatic relations between the French Government, at that time headed by General De Gaulle, and the Holy See.

BELGIAN SOCIALIST PREMIER AND CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

Brussels, 6/3 (CIP)—"I know that I am hurting the feelings of some of my Socialist friends by saying that the future of Europe will be the combined result of Socialist thought and Christian civilization, but let us admit that times have changed!" *Prime Minister Paul Henri Spaak* of Belgium declared in an address before a Socialist audience at Pont-a-Lesse, Province of Namur, at the end of May. "The ideas which we (the Socialists) had about religion and clericalism fifty years ago cannot be maintained any longer today. We cannot ally ourselves with the Communists because it is impossible to co-operate with them on an economic and social program without renouncing the dignity of the human person. From the political point of view, the Communists are today what the Nazis and the Fascists were before the war."

Prime Minister Spaak's speech was significant as a statement of general principles as well as from the point of view of immediate political expediency. The recent Cabinet crisis over the school question was caused not only by a rift between the Christian Social Party and the Socialists, but also by a divergence of views between M. Spaak and the left wing of his own Party, especially the Chairman of its Executive Committee, *Max Buset.* The Prime Minister, therefore, emphasized strongly the need for maintaining the present Government coalition since any other policy on the part of the Socialists would play into the hands of the Communists. Beyond this immediate need, however, M. Spaak expressed his conviction that Socialists in Belgium, and on the European continent in general, must revise their attitude towards Christianity, that they should give up the remnants of doctrinaire Marxism and develop their parties along lines similar to those of the British Labor Party.

Prime Minister Spaak began his speech by reaffirming his faith in Socialism. He qualified this statement immediately, however, by quoting with approval a recent speech by the British Prime Minister, *Clement R. Attlee,* who said that "Socialism is much more a way of life than an economic doctrine." The experiences which Europe has had with Fascism, Nazism and Communism, M. Spaak declared, have made it clear that "Socialism is a moral position on a number of problems," and that "it is essential that Socialists must never be conservative." This means, in his view, that "Socialism cannot be achieved by methods and tactics conceived 50 or 100 years ago."

Praising the results of co-operation with the Christian Social Party, Prime Minister Spaak claimed that economic and social reforms in Belgium have been more successful than the nationalization of certain industries in other countries. He mentioned in particular the system of "compensations" in the Belgian coal production, under which those mines which make great profits pay part of them into a compensation fund which aids those operating on a deficit, thus making it possible to keep miners' wages higher than they would be otherwise. On the matter of family wages, M. Spaak defended the general attitude of the Christian Social Party against that of some of the Socialist labor union leaders.

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The Stage & Screen

Sleepy Hollow

PERHAPS there is a good musical play buried somewhere in the works of Washington Irving, but unfortunately the movers of this show have not managed to find it. Neither the combined efforts of Russell Maloney and Miriam Battista (bookman and lyricist), nor the "assistance" of Marc Connelly, nor the honest shenanigans of a great number of hard-working actors, can any way lift the business into entertainment. I can only say that a slow reiteration of the title provides the only description of this theatre evening. (*at the St. James*)

The Insect Comedy

THE VERSION of Josef and Karel Capek's play, which José Ferrer is now using at the City Center, is Owen Davis's—the same version which William A. Brady produced in 1921. And it is ironic to note that whereas in that remote year the piece must have seemed the zenith of expressionism, it does nowadays come off, in its useful sections, as the simplest naturalism, and fairly worn naturalism at that. So much for academic categories.

The play details a drunken tramp, arrived in a forest in his flight from the corrupt city, and finding an analogy to human behaviour in the behaviour of insects: a number of tedious butterflies assess for him the values of the city's café crowd; beetles imitate bankers; flies imitate Bolsheviks; ants adumbrate Hitler; in the end, a couple of snails come off as *the masses, and the world,* LIFE, trumpeted in capital letters, is supposed to mean something. And if this entangled sentence should appear to be skimped synopsis of a sincere allegory, I can only underline that the play is no longer an allegory at all.

I will say, however, that the production is again an estimable job, comparable technically to the company's handling of "The Alchemist" earlier this spring. With his short two weeks of rehearsal, Mr. Ferrer runs some thirty actors on and off the stage to make the "Ant" episode of the business one of the directorial triumphs of the season. Alexander Scourby and Robert Caroll star in this, but not honestly more than the entire company, which executes unbelievably complicated and thrilling maneuvers, under Herbert Brodkin's excellent lighting. Aside from this theatrical high-spot, it is unfortunate that the entire effort must go down only as an intellectual curiosity in our current election year. (*at the City Center*)

Re-View of The Heiress

WITH THE departure of Wendy Hiller, it is good to be able to report that Beatrice Straight has taken over the lead in the Goetz-Harris arrangement of Henry James's "Washington Square." The play is still, I think, one of the most absorbing, and arguable, on the street; and certainly a triumph in its physical production and in its players. Miss Straight fits very well into this adjusted scene. She is less mannered than Miss Hiller, far less affected—a prettier but somehow a plainer "Catherine." As the consensus of critical opinion has already nominated her the most seriously important actress of the year, I think there is no question that she must be seen in her most serious and important job so far. (*at the Biltmore*)

KAPPO PHELAN

Return to Yesterday

MOVIES have always liked looking into the past for plots and settings, but just because they do look back doesn't mean they are necessarily escapist. Of the three items reviewed this week, only one is completely out of this world and concerned with problems apart from today's woes.

"Letter from an Unknown Woman" goes back to the lush Vienna of 1900, but its main theme (about the unfortunate woman who loved and lost) is as old as the hills and as current as the New Look. The lead rôle provides a field day for Joan Fontaine, who runs the gamut in her portrayal of Lisa, the lovesick girl who can't get over her infatuation for a rising pianist (Louis Jordan), finally has a short, whirlwind romance and then is forgotten by this self-centered artist. Years later, dressed in lavish gowns provided by her wealthy husband who has generously cared for her and her child, Lisa turns up in all her splendor, meets the pianist again and discovers what a cad he really is when he approaches her as a new conquest. Director Max Opuls has handled this plot, which stems from a Stefan Zweig story, with the bitter-sweet touches it deserves. Soft romance is effectively contrasted with hard reality. The acting is good; the Viennese locale is excellent; and the whole piece is bathed in an appropriate misty photography. If you feel inclined to weep for Lisa, you recall that her standards are shaky; and while this does not make her problem any easier, you may still wonder why she is taking up so much of your time.

You probably won't be too greatly concerned with any of the people in *"The Woman in White,"* a screen adaptation of the Wilkie Collins novel that drools with romance and mystery. Producer Henry Blanke decorated this famous story with some fancy settings, 1850 costumes and a good cast. I wish, however, that he and Director Peter Godfrey had stylized the picture even more, perhaps in the manner of the successful "Great Expectations" or "An Ideal Husband." But if you like a little corny escapism from the present, this movie is for you. In fact it supplies the works, including murder, insanity, hypnotism, three lovely heroines (Eleanor Parker playing two; Alexis Smith in the third), a villainous count (Sydney Greenstreet), his batty wife (Agnes Moorehead), a brave hero (Gig Young, who is kept very busy with the three pretty girls) and various other typical nineteenth century characters. Never a dull moment.

Although *"Fighting Father Dunne"* goes back to 1905 to tell the story of this St. Louis priest who founded a home for newsboys, the film's main theme of love for fellow men is timeless, and concerns us as much today as it

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did back when Father Dunne said, "You can't push my boys around." Actually, this picture, which is a minor production, has been so well directed by Ted Tetzlaff that it is not the tear-jerker you might expect. Instead, it is an intelligently handled entertainment about a subject that is not really entertaining and could have been presented in a bowl of mush. Thanks should go to Pat O'Brien for his excellent performance in underplaying the lead rôle, and to a lot of kids, most of whom are not familiar movie youngsters, who look and act like real children. Doubtless everyone believes that there shouldn't be any juvenile delinquents, but it takes someone like this Father Dunne, who is willing to fight for his convictions, to prove the point. And the important thing about this movie is that, without getting didactic, it makes you see how you can help—even though you don't have the courage or vitality of Father Dunne.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Labor Movement

God Blesses America

AMERICA is a country on which God has showered blessings with a peculiar generosity. It is a generosity that seems to bear little if any connection with our deserts. But undeserved or not, our good luck is phenomenal.

Here is a recent example. For months American labor and management had been working up to a big, knock-down-drag-out fight. Our last column detailed some of the preliminary skirmishes. Labor had suffered a fairly important defeat in the meat strike. There had been other defeats. Labor men were gloomy everywhere. Then came what appeared to be a crucial engagement: the big Chrysler strike.

The company had offered a six-cent raise and later withdrew it when the union turned thumbs down. The other big auto companies were being even tougher in their own negotiations, following the lead of Big Steel and the big electrical outfits in refusing any increase whatsoever. Ford even proposed a wage cut.

So the strike went on for two weeks. Most people thought it would be a long affair. The union involved, the United Auto Workers, CIO, was continuing its negotiations with General Motors and taking strike votes in GM locals. Some of the votes were actually going against strike action, an almost unprecedented action, since most of the workers consider these votes as only so much pressure on the company. This served to depress the union leaders even more.

At the bargaining table the UAW missed the scrappy confidence and ability of its president, Walter P. Reuther, who was still convalescing from the shotgun wound inflicted by an unsuccessful assassin. Nothing seemed to favor the union; everything seemed to favor the companies and a good hot class war that might easily paralyze the country's economy and shoot the spiral of inflation even higher into the air.

Then suddenly, with the Chrysler strike thirteen days old, General Motors offers 11 cents in a rather tricky cost-of-living arrangement and a few days later Chrysler settles the strike with a flat 13-cent increase. The whole labor climate changes overnight from stormy to mild and sunny.

You might be able to dig up some good hard-headed business reasons why GM, the most profitable and perhaps the most powerful corporation in the world, decided to call off the war and make an honorable offer to the UAW. We still think it was the grace of God.

Amusing sidelight of the GM settlement: the reaction of Communist elements in the CIO.

If there was any one labor group that was even gloomier than the average before the GM break it was the Stalinists who control the big United Electrical Radio & Machine Workers, CIO. They were literally over a barrel. General Electric and Westinghouse had refused any increases; a number of companies had refused even to continue recognition because the UE leaders had not signed the non-Communist affidavits; the National Labor Relations Board had refused to allow the UE to appear on the ballot in bargaining elections for the same reason; and Philip Murray, president of the CIO, had refused to call off the UAW raiders who were stealing the UE's dwindling membership. Everything was black—not blue, or deep purple, but black.

Came GM's 11 cents and the UE rode in on the UAW's coat-tails for the 40,000 electrical workers employed by GM and represented by UE. The Stalinists accepted the offer in a hurry. If they had been religious men, they would have been down on their knees thanking God for saving their union and their jobs. But they made no public expressions of thanksgiving. They even controlled their faces to the extent of intimating that the agreement was really rather disappointing, but that they had to accept it because the UAW had done so.

The reason for this act is obvious. In the UAW the Stalinists were recently decimated by Walter Reuther. No matter what Reuther does, even if it is only to be shot at, it is wrong. And so, when the Reuther administration accepted the GM contract, with the escalator clause allowing for a possible 2-cent drop in wages over the next two years (that is, after the 11-cent raise), the Stalinist faction opened fire. The *Daily Worker* referred to "the wage-cutting escalator clause" and said it was "getting bitter comment in auto centers." It quoted approvingly the comment of Richard T. Leonard, one of the ousted vice-presidents who is now making a comeback as president of a Chrysler DeSoto local and a member of the Chrysler negotiating committee. Said Leonard of the Chrysler victory: "We won because we refused to make workers slaves to statistics and an escalator set-up."

There is only one weakness in the Communists' campaign to use Chrysler's straight 13 cents to blast GM's 11-cents-on-an-escalator and the Reuther administration that negotiated it. Two weaknesses, to be exact. One, any fool can see that the GM break softened up Chrysler and made possible a victory that might never have been won without it. Two, Norman Matthews, a leader in the Reuther faction, negotiated the Chrysler settlement. Make it three weaknesses, because any fool can also see that a union that can win an 11-cent increase, either on or off an escalator, in the anti-labor atmosphere prevailing on May 25 is doing pretty well. And they did it without Reuther. Nevertheless, the Stalinist charade is amusing when you consider all the angles.

JOHN C. CORT.

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Books

Mirabeau. Antonina Vallentin. Translated by E. W. Dickes. Viking. $5.00.

IN FRANCE, where it was first published two years ago, this valuable biography appeared as two distinct books. It really so remains, though "Mirabeau Before the Revolution" and "Mirabeau in the Revolution" are here bound in one volume with interesting pictures—including one of Mirabeau looking something like John L. Lewis—in the middle. In the life of Mirabeau the dichtomy is deep. The biographer must tell the story of a man who for nearly forty years seemed a thorough victim of circumstances, pushed from one prison or other unfavorable position to another; who, before he died at forty-two, had taken his place as the short-bodied Provencal giant of public affairs.

I do not know whether Antonina Vallentin conveys enough of the cultural and quotidian history of the last half of the eighteenth century in France, or whether anyone else ever has done or will do so. That time of geometrical thinking and fine passions is mysterious, inexhaustible; certainly it was as much the age of unreason as not. It was from about 1749 on, the year of Gabriel de Mirabeau's birth, that people began to cultivate tenderness on a large scale. The young Mirabeau was what the times, his actively hostile father ("The Friend of Man," the old Marquis de Mirabeau was called publicly, after his best-known book) and his own boundless vitality made him. No wonder he ran wild. But Gabriel de Mirabeau, in whom many qualities were fused, combined the emotional and the reasonable intensities of his time: the powers for enthusiasm of a man like Retif de la Bretonne with the analytical faculties of a writer like Choderlos de Laclos—fellow Jacobin with Mirabeau and his collaborator at one time. An instantaneous, cutting knowledge of motives gave the edge to Mirabeau's eloquence. In debate he could regularly refute his opponents before they had gone through all the steps of their own reasonings.

Elected to the States General as a member for the Third Estate, the nobles denying him both before and after his election, Mirabeau began early in 1789 to demonstrate his sagacity and force. He was responsible for the Third Estate's successful policy of refusing to budge, of making the other Estates and the monarch come to it. His words to the royal master of ceremonies on June 23 shook the social framework: "Go and tell those who sent you that we are here by the will of the people and that we shall not leave except by force of bayonets." In July he galvanized the Assembly against the foreign troops being accumulated around Paris and Versailles. He saved the Assembly from the ill-advised modesty of resigning for new elections and in an especially stunning speech imposed the radical financial policy of Necker, his personal adversary. He became a sort of subjective correlative for almost all the important events of 1789; all except the disastrous event of October when the crowd invaded Versailles and brought the king and queen to Paris, their first certain step toward ruin. With that Mirabeau had nothing to do.

Like other biographers of Mirabeau, Mme. Vallentin makes it clear that he was sincere in that support of the monarchy which eventually compromised him and his memory. The great frustration in Mirabeau's career, his disappointment which changed history, was the decision of the Assembly in November of 1789 that its members could not become ministers. From that time on Mirabeau had to work more and more secretly for the preservation of a king with executive power. But before then he had supported publicly, against great opposition, the king's right to veto. The fact that Louis enabled Mirabeau to live richly during the last months of his life is incidental, Mirabeau's policy having been consistent from first to last. Even toward the end, ill and working between fits of lassitude brought on by the failure to take his advice, Mirabeau evolved the only plan which might, in Jaurè's phrase, have "counterbalanced reality"—the reality of the Terror, of "liberty" destroying liberty. The Convention was wrong when, in 1793, learning of Mirabeau's relations with the court, it ordered his remains torn up from their first resting-place, beside Descartes's. Not only did Mirabeau represent another aspect of the national genius; it was appropriate that beside the philosopher who was so careful to respect the old ways, the "ways twisting among the mountains" as they are called in "The Discourse on Method," should lie the statesman who saw with unequaled clearness that the ways must be straightened, yet wished to proceed with moderation.

From one point of view, Mme. Vallentin's book might have profited from some of the geometrical alignment common in the eighteenth century. As a guide through the intricacies of Mirabeau's acts and pronouncements, it lacks the lucid ordering and the hard gem-like glow of Louis Barthou's "Mirabeau." Nor, naturally, does this biography show the general grasp of Ortega y Gasset's "Mirabeau o el politico," which sets up *el magnifico provenzal* as a perfected type of the political man. On the other hand, this book has notable qualities of its own: many sharp observations well woven in (observations like "Neither the comtesse nor Mirabeau calculated how insupportable is the burden of gratitude . . ."); wise incorporation of Mirabeau's own words; deep feeling. Mme. Vallentin's work was done during the occupation in circumstances which she describes in a moving preface, not included here, to "Mirabeau avant la Revolution." She kept going through abysmal discouragements because of her own and Mirabeau's faith in freedom. Her "Mirabeau" is a worthy companion piece to Barthou's book and Ortega's essay.

WARREN RAMSAY.

Stranger in the Earth. Thomas Sugrue. Holt. $4.00.

THIS EXTRAORDINARY book is a mixture of self-analysis and autobiography, and more of the former than the latter, though the publishers call it an autobiography, with the usual distrust of the trade for the unusual. Sugrue calls himself "a compound of minorities, of contradictions: son of a Connecticut Irish Catholic Wilsonian Democrat, educated in Virginia at a university founded by the Presbytery, trained on a Republican newspaper, hired to hymn the nation's great by a popular magazine, enamored of the mystical way." The book challenges comparison in some respects with "The Education of Henry Adams," which is also miscalled an autobiography, but it deals still less with the world and more with the spirit. Sugrue is not as wise a man as Adams, however, though more of a mystic, and the learning so freely bandied about in these pages often is more encyclopedic (in the sense of being derived from encyclopedias) than solid.

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Stricken by a mysterious crippling disorder after a successful career as one of Stanley Walker's young men on the *Herald-Tribune* and as a staff writer for the *American Magazine,* Sugrue was compelled by circumstances to indulge a natural bent for mysticism and philosophical speculation of a nature deeper and more complex than that aired at Bleek's modern Mermaid Tavern. Condemned to a course of painful heat therapy, Sugrue sets himself the problem of psychoanalyzing himself in a series of dialogues with an imaginary Professor, who symbolizes the modern scientific spirit, during the long hours of treatment. These dialogues, which are more often than not really monologues, are alternated with sections of straight autobiography. The latter are more revealing of Sugrue's true nature and opinions than the dizzy flights of dialectic and muzzy mysticism in the dialogue sections. Both help, however, to explain "the compound of contradictions" which Sugrue admits he is. He has a searching mind which, being deeply committed to the American political ideal, wants to participate in religion individualistically as it participates in politics. Influenced by the Puritanical tradition of New England, he is inclined "to individual inspiration and positive virtue as opposed to appointed external guidance and passive, or negative virtue"—the Americanism condemned by Leo XIII. Rebellious against clerical authoritarianism which refuses to explain or reason, and critical of many aspects of the Church as an institution, Sugrue seeks refuge within the Church of the mystics. But true to his contradictory nature, he is too much interested in the world to abandon it as complete mystics do. With a curious mixture of love, hate, impishness, and eloquence he probes and ponders the problems of his country and his faith.

This is not an easy book to read or to review, but it repays the effort it requires. In the autobiographical sections Sugrue is a more tender Joyce writing "The portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" in terms of a New England Irish Catholic. In the philosophical sections he is less successful, skirting the brink of a pretentious but somewhat callow intellectualism. But anyone who knows Sugrue only as the ghost of Starling of the White House and of Eddie Condon will be surprised by the substance of the spirit here revealed. MASON WADE.

The Two Worlds of Marcel Proust. Harold March. Pennsylvania. $3.50.

THE judicious reader will find this a good—and in places excellent—study of Proust and his work. The first chapter, "The Climate of Ideas," is a gesture of piety to the academic gods and should be skipped. Five chapters of biography follow and then more than a hundred pages on "Remembrance of Things Past." How many of these pages one will wish to read depends upon one's familiarity with Proust's work; a great deal of what Mr. March has to say is not new, but it is sound. His critical exposition neither over-simplifies nor over-complicates. The final chapter, "The Meaning of Proust," should be read by everybody; it is short and some of it is new. As far as I know, this is the most comprehensive book on Proust yet to appear in English; it contains a full treatment of both the Proust biography and the Proust *oeuvre,* making many new details about them available in English for the first time. All quotations are in English, which makes the book particularly useful to "the common reader."

VIVIAN MERCIER.

Richest of the Poor: The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi. Theodore Maynard. Doubleday. $3.

THE TASK of the religious biographer is one subject to many pitfalls. If, to take an extreme example, he essays to portray the life of Jesus, he is promptly confronted with the dilemma: should he write of Him as of a human being or as of the Son of God: a Being with divine attributes. If he should attempt the first, his task, by the mere process of elimination, would be a relatively simple one. For one thing, he would explain away rather than explain the miracles. He would make him a man, a personality if you like, who had the magnetism, the power and the eloquence to sway other men. He would reduce His worshippers to a credulous mob of human beings, honest enough in their way, and essentially ignorant men given to wishful thinking. In the result, there might be a human being called Jesus, but certainly no Christ.

If the biographer should attempt the second, i.e., to portray a Being both human and divine—divine in a very strict sense of the word—he would be faced with the inevitably insoluble problem, that of grasping infinity, the very essence of the Godhead, with his own definitely finite mind. And how could that be done? How read the unlimited mystery of God's mind with his own limited mind, however clever and penetrating? An English writer, an author of detective stories, has written, if I remember aright, a book dealing with "the mind of the Maker," but I hope I may be pardoned if I am skeptical enough to doubt if even a mystery story writer has the capacity for interpreting the mystery of divinity.

However this may be, any biographer of Christ, and for that matter, his reader, must take the mystery for granted; to do otherwise would leave one and the other at a dead end. Intelligent men will find reasons for faith, and certainly no reasons for a lack of it, so that even our great physicists of today are turning from the centuries-old idea of a mechanistic universe to the idea of a universe which does not exclude some Supreme Mystery, and even a God.

All of this brings us to the question of biographies of saints, with particular reference to this biography of Saint Francis of Assisi by Theodore Maynard. There are saints and saints, to be sure; or, meaning no irreverence, as some wag once put it: "There are pianists and pianists. I refer to the latter only." By which I mean that there are saints by virtue of being great noble souls who suffered their way to martyrdom by sheer integrity of character. These were highly principled men who would not yield to expedience and dishonor; such a man was Sir Thomas More, of whose life Mr. Maynard made an excellent book quite recently. May we not, without hurting anyone's feelings, refer to More as a saint by courtesy? But Saint Francis is quite another matter. Saint Francis, unlike More, defies reason. The story of his miracles, of his stigmata, of the mystery which to this day has colored Assisi in a way which must impress even the non-believer, is one which has elements of the supernatural. Consider the following passage from Mr. Maynard's book:

". . . What was far more like him was what happened at a time Clare and some of her nuns were visiting him at the Portiuncula. Then he caused the meal to be served on the bare floor, as was often his way. Before they began to eat he began to speak of God so sublimely that not

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only Francis and Clare but everybody there was rapt in ecstasy. Night fell upon them, and they sat there unmoving. The inhabitants of Assisi, like the peasants nearby, seeing a glow all over the Portiuncula, supposed that it had caught fire; so they ran toward it in crowds to try and save the place. But when they came where Francis and Clare were sitting they found the poor buildings intact and the saints sitting on the ground in rapture before their untasted food, and over all there shone the fire of Divine Love."

In short, you must believe or not; you must take it or leave it. Mr. Maynard sets it all down as something above controversy, or the need of proof. And his direct prose is not of so subtle a texture as to impel that conviction in the reader which he himself seems to possess in good measure. And, in the absence of new material, this forthrightness, this take-it-for-granted attitude, without the support of a proper Thomist dialectic or adequate prose style of a persuasive nature, his biography is not one to leave any distinguished mark.

In one respect Mr. Maynard is on solid ground. He pronounces Saint Francis to be first and foremost a poet, "a very unusual sort of poet . . . the poet who lives his poetry rather than writes it." He is, indeed, a poet very much as Saint Thomas is a man of reason. Not that there isn't some reason in one, and some poetry in the other. One has but to read the prayers of both to note the difference. Saint Francis lived in a day when men's fundamental perceptions were keener. And, as today, men have lost the knack of following a scent or a trail, so it is also possible (radar, wireless and what-not assisting us) we have today lost that intangible and acute sense that once led men to believe in the mystery of God.

JOHN COURNOS.

Saint Francis of Assisi: The Legends and Lauds. Otto Karrer. Sheed. $3.00.

"HERE, for the first time, the most beautiful of the old legends concerning Saint Francis of Assisi are brought together. . . . Evidently there could be no question of reproducing the different texts in their entirety, not only with regard to the available space, but also because this would lead to many repetitions, some of the legends actually reproducing the others word for word. In sorting the material it was found that this could easily be avoided without detracting from the originality or the structure of the legends." The above quotation from Otto Karrer's scholarly Preface to this collation of Franciscan lore explains what he attempted. Unfortunately, the reader, perhaps because of the undistinguished translation from Karrer's writing into English, has a sense of confusion, and wishes that the translator had been as scholarly as the author, and that the editor had let the legends stand as they were, availing himself of the charming English translations extant. One longs for the more pleasing English of Paschal Robinson, Montgomery Carmichael, and A. G. Ferrers-Howell; the *"Fioretti,"* as here given, have not the loveliness of the Salter-Okey-Robert Steele translations, nor is the rendering of "The Canticle of Brother Sun" comparable in beauty with Sophie Jewett's exquisite lines. Thus it is evident that the work is a scholarly one which will not satisfy scholars because it is not complete, nor appeal to the average reader as much as do more poetic translations. This said, one can but praise the excellent Preface with

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its succinct picture of the age, its delightful and sympathetic portrait of Francis, and its sensible recognition of the problem presented almost immediately by the Saint's insistence on perfect poverty such as he believed Our Lord exacted of His followers. The introductions and notes for "The Legend of the Three Companions" (which Karrer believes with Lazzeri to have been the work of Giovanni di Ceprano), and for the selections from Thomas of Celano, Brother Leo and His Companions, Saint Bonaventure, the *"Fioretti," "Laude"* and "Testament" are always interesting and often original in their approach, and evidence a thorough knowledge of Latin, Italian, French and German studies of source material: there seem to be only two references to English writers: Father Cuthbert and A. G. Little. Sabatier undoubtedly impressed Karrer as much or more than most scholars, and he painstakingly refutes some of his theories.

That Karrer's sympathies are with the Little Poor Man himself and his original companions is manifest, but his exposition of the inevitable modification of the early manner of life and subsequent developments in the Franciscan Order is generous and fair.

D. H. MOSELEY.

Personal Equation. Albert Guerard. Norton. $3.50.

THIS is the record of the Americanization of a man whose kind has been rare in later immigration to this country. I do not mean that Mr. Guerard was a wealthy young man when he arrived; on the contrary, he had no money and I gather that he has made no fortune since he came, but he did bring with him the sort of mouse-trap that brought hundreds of enthusiastic students to his class room door at Stanford University and that has earned a sizable public for his books and articles. What he brought was a good mind which had been vigorously trained in his native France and further developed by study at Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel. It was also an alert mind, curious, analytical, critical, and withal humorous and optimistic. Mr. Guerard's style, which contains too much staccato and has too many aphorisms, may discourage some readers but it is a pleasure to recommend the book as a challenge to all those American who measure their way of life by blind acquiesence to conformity, fear, ignorance, and hysteria.

FLORENCE CODMAN.

Return to Poetry. Edited by John Gilland Brunini, Francis X. Connolly, and Joseph G. E. Hopkins. Declan X. McMullen. $3.50.

A COLLECTION of essays from *Spirit,* the Catholic Poetry Society's mazagine of verse, "Return to Poetry" is composed of a selection of some sixty-nine editorials and articles which have appeared during the period from 1934 through 1946. The book opens appropriately with "A Manifesto on Poetry," issued at the second congress of the Catholic Poetry Society, held at Hunter College in 1946. As this date suggests, the material is not presented chronologically but rather is grouped into several categories, as suggested by the following headings: reaffirmations of poetic values; the poetic experience; the rôle of tradition; poetry and philosophy; poetry and propaganda; the power of poetic language; poetry; a fusion of many factors; and the poet in the world of today. Helen C. White's "Ten Years of Spirit," forms an appropriate epilogue.

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One of the anonymous contributors (the editorials are unsigned) states that "No one has finally evolved . . . a satisfactory definition of what poetry is, although very much has been written on the subject, much that is illuminating, but nothing that is not incomplete." If one adds that there are also some essays which are not illuminating and some actually trivial, the quotation might serve as characterization of the volume. The articles, forming the major portion of the book are reasonably well developed discussions of the wide variety of topics they subject to analysis and comment. Inevitably there are many opinions expressed which the responsive reader will find it impossible to accept. For example, John Duffy writes at length on the problem of individualism in poetry and spends much of his time berating modern poetry for its unintelligibility: "There are, it may be assumed for simplification, four main schools of the unintelligible, though individual poets will combine the schools in their work. There are the symbolists, the associationists, the allusionists, and the out-and-out insane." By way of illuminating these categories he cites the work of T. S. Eliot, especially in "Four Quartets," as that of an "unintelligible symbolist," while the Eliot of "The Waste Land" and "Ash Wednesday" is "not only an irritating symbolist, but also an unintelligible associationist and allusionist." (The reader may be relieved to find that one of the most powerful influences in modern poetry is not "out-and-out insane" as well!) It is good, consequently, to find John S. Kennedy in his essay on the poet and his philosophy reminding us that "the failure to communicate may not be the fault of the poets wholly or at all; it may very well be that of an audience ignorant, insensitive, or inert," and then appropriately quoting Allen Tate: "Modern poetry is difficult because we have lost the art of reading any poetry that will not read itself to us."

Since it is obviously impossible for a reviewer to provide any sort of detailed commentary on the wealth (and occasional poverty) of a book of such variety as this, he can only call attention to a few of the essays. George A. McCauliff's "Religious Poetry—an Inquiry" is one of the sanest discussions I know of the nature of religious poetry; it is particularly welcome since one or two of his colleagues come dangerously near to insisting that all pietistic poetry is good religious poetry. "Religiosity in religious poetry," writes Mr. McCauliff, "stems from the babblings of religious infants. Spoon-fed by God in the earliest stages of contemplation, they seek more the sweetness of religious pabulum than the vital nourishment it contains. They find themselves well-fed emotionally, cleansed (so they think) of dross, and they bed down contentedly with what they imagine to be God." The qualities of a good critic are set forth by James Craig LaDriere in "The Rôle of the Critic," an orderly and sensible statement of the importance of intelligence, awareness, disinterestedness, humility, and honesty as the particular virtues all critics should possess. Of the relatively few contributions of more technical character, "Symbolism in Mediaeval Latin Poetry" by Anton Pegis is unquestionably the best. And the concluding essay, Miss White's "Ten Years of *Spirit*," stimulating in several ways, contains a remarkably cogent statement on the value of knowing the past, a thoroughly adequate answer to the scoffers at tradition, the self-satisfied individualists whose sole concern is the Here and Now:

> The past is not a prison house which he [the poet] dare not return to. It is the treasury of the past experience of men

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from which any intelligent man may draw. It is an arsenal of techniques, of imaginative resources, of hints and suggestions, of insights, and warnings, and reassurances, from which the man not imprisoned in his own moment may draw at will. Its vitality is his own surest pledge of future sympathy and helpfulness. For tradition is the continuing and deepening and widening stream of human experience. Not to enter into its mighty current is to be becalmed in a backwater, however turbulent. Not to be aware of its existence is to live and to die without entering into one's human inheritance and to leave the world poorer than one found it. Tradition should be presented to the poet, then, not as something monitory or disciplinary but as something creative anl fructifying and dynamic.

All in all, "Return to Poetry" confronts us with the basic problems in the composition and reading of poetry and offers solutions for most of them. As Fra Lippo Lippi put it,

God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out.

THOMAS A. KIRBY.

Literary Criticisms by Francis Thompson. Discovered and Collected by Terence L. Connolly. Dutton. $12.50.

THIS is a book to love and treasure and turn to through the years. It's a large, beautiful book; and the work of a large, exceptionally beautiful mind. And it's also a great surprise; for nobody had known much about the work of Francis Thompson during the last ten years or so of his life. True, there had been that strange notation in his notebook: "1897: End of Poet. Beginning of Journalist. The years of transition completed." And there had been references to his book-reviewing. But the reviews, appearing in ten or twelve different publications, were seldom signed; and, in the main, their authorship was not suspected. Now Father Connolly has identified and brought together for the first time a whole hundred of them.

And it isn't enough to say that they reveal Thompson as a brilliant critic. They reveal him as a prose writer of importance. They reveal him as a man of wider and sounder scholarship than I, for one, had taken him to be. Above all, they reveal him as a man whose mind was on eternity, but who was yet very much a man of his own hour—a quick observer and a sure, confident fighter for the things he believed in.

Here Francis Thompson stands forth as a man. We have all known him, of course, as a poet. Who has not been stirred by the organ music of his verses? Who has not argued, passionately, that by their tonal qualities, by the harmonics of his words, he brought to poetry a richness, a magnificence, to match the loftiness of his themes? (Who can forget these wars of our youth?) But here, as I say, Francis Thompson stands before us as a man; and not a weak man, but a man recovered from his sickness; a strong man and therefore a generous man; and a man of wide-ranging, powerful intellect.

Thus he strikes his tonic firmly in the opening sentence of one review: "D'Annunzio is a master of unquestionable genius in a very questionable school." Thus he pays tribute to the honesty of Leslie Stephen's discourse on Matthew Arnold: "It is the best essay ever written by a critic on an author . . . whose root-principles are the destructive opposite of his own." Thus he sums up Edgar Allan Poe: "The scope is strange and narrow, but the mastership is absolute." And thus he deals—quite rightly —with another American, Paul Elmer More;" . . . he has so wasted his abilities in pondering his dislikes that he has . . . become little more than a 'cultured' talker about books to persons who like a 'cultured' man."

There's liveliness and wit, and solid learning gracefully carried and beautifully expressed, in all these many essays; and between them all they form a respectable history of literature. Implicit in this book is the substance of a Catholic literary credo.

DAVID MARSHALL.

Heart In Pilgrimage. Evelyn Eaton and Edward Roberts Moore. Harper. $2.75.

IT TAKES more than one or two successful efforts to eradicate an ingrained prejudice against so hybrid a form as the historical novel. Particularly when that prejudice was built up long before the current breed of costume novels had proved such a meal ticket for publishers and rental library operators. Give me my history straight! Let novels be about more or less contemporary figures beset by at least some of our current anxieties. In theory, then, a book which goes even further, compounding biography, history and a fictional slice of life should have proved exceeding dull.

That such should not have been the case here is puzzling. Basically, I suppose, it is because Elizabeth Seton's life is such an absorbing story straight through. And also because of the restraint which the authors maintain in telling every phase of her life, so deftly and so neatly that they imply infinitely more. Perhaps again this is a matter of personal prejudice, this time involving style or taste.

It is a book filled with memorable situations: the strange family set-up at the Setons' where Elizabeth went to live as a young bride in the New York of 1800 or thereabouts; the not entirely disinterested devotion of her deceased husband's best friend in Italy who played the major rôle in her conversion; her resourcefulness in supporting her four children; and the way, despite family responsibilities, she founded the Sisters of Charity; the early days of her community in the wilds of western Maryland. "Heart In Pilgrimage" because of its underemphasis is an unusual sort of saint's life to be published in the United States—primarily a good story simply, artfully told.

EDWARD S. SKILLIN.

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